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DEFENCE OF BRAHMOISM

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Being

A LECTURE

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AND THE BRAHMO SAMAJ.

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GENTLEMEN:

You are aware that a warm controversy has been raging for some years past between some Christian Missionaries and the leaders of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj about the truth of Brahmoism. The battle is growing thicker day by day, and, if common rumor speak aright, mightier combatants than those that have already appeared on the field, are girding their loins for the fight, evidently thinking Brahmoism to be no ordinary foe. The horizon is growing darker and darker and greater fulminations and thunderings are expected to take place but without however, it may be safely guessed, the useful complement of showers refreshing to those, who thirst after truth.

According to one view of the controversy, Gentlemen, it cannot but grieve us, Brahmos, believers in catholic religion, as we are, to mark the bitterness of feeling that has been created by it between the Christian and the Brahmo, who both believe that the essence of religion is love, "love to God and love to man", and who are sons of the common Father with whom "verily there is no regard of persons, but in every nation he that worketh righteous-

ness and feareth him is accepted". But in another view we cannot but be glad at the present discussion, for it is certain that our religion will come out brighter and stronger from the fiery ordeal, convincing men of its internal strength, and leading them to a clearer recognition of "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," but which is obstructed to our view by the mist of prejudice and passion.

It is my intention to offer, this evening, with reference to this controversy, some remarks on Intuition, and the guiding principles of the Brahmo Samaj, in vindication of our religion and its principal followers, avoiding as much as possible the *odium theologicum*.

It shall be my endeavour in this lecture to keep always prominently in my view the principle, that among all religious denominations, the meek followers of the catholic religion, for Brahmoism is essentially *the* catholic religion, should exhibit in their own persons conspicuous examples of religious toleration and love, never indulging in sarcasm instead of argument, and in vituperation instead of fair reasoning; never sacrificing candour for the sake of mere liveliness. My remarks will not have reference to the arguments contained in a single lecture of a single Christian Missionary, but to the arguments advanced by Christian Missionaries in general in this country against Brahmoism.

The Christian Missionaries who attack

the Brahmo Samaj say that Intuition is insufficient to give us a clear idea of God. I would beseech these reverend gentlemen to consider that revelation always presupposes a being that reveals, the goodness of that being, his infallibility and holiness, or else what he says cannot be believed in. Now the infallibility and the perfect holiness of God necessarily imply his other perfections. A revelation is not at all possible unless a Perfect Being exists.

Now if we are able to know so much, clearly and distinctly I say, without revelation, what is the necessity of it? Cannot all the other truths of religion, the most important for our salvation be deduced from the above? Has God made a *natural* provision for the gratification of every one of our natural wants and not for that of the greatest necessity of human nature, thirst after religious knowledge?

Is not belief in God himself, our Creator, Comforter, and Redeemer, whose sweetness should perfume our whole life, and the beauty of whose holiness should ever be present before the eye of the mind, as light that clasps heaven and earth in its lovely embrace is before that of the body—I ask, is not a belief in Him only quite sufficient for salvation without a belief in a Mediator? Is the assistance of a third party required for a son to go to his father? Is every man who loves God with all his heart and strength, and who loves his neighbour as himself, but who, from *conscientious* scruples, cannot believe in Christianity to be

roasted in eternal hell-fire? If that be not the case why then insist so much on the acceptance of a book revelation as necessary for salvation? Granted that a book revelation exists, what is its test? It cannot be any other thing than Intuition. Its test can neither be the miracles, which the apostles of Christ themselves said every false prophet coming in the name of Christ could work, nor prophecies couched in the most enigmatical language, and admitting of a thousand different interpretations, but the heart of man on whose fleshly tablets God has written the only true revelation. Suppose if a voice from the heavens cry out: "Oh man! lie! steal! bear false-witness! for lying, stealing, and bearing false-witness is the true road to salvation", could we believe in such a voice? Certainly not. Why could we not believe in it? Because its utterances would not agree with those of our own hearts.

It is plain therefore that "Intuition is our revelation and likewise the evidence of that revelation". The Brahmos cannot believe in any other revelation than what is contained in "The elder Scripture writ with God's own hand Scripture authentic, uncorrupt by man".

Christian Missionaries assert that it is evident that Intuition does not give us a clear idea of God because degrading notions of him are found to prevail among the nations of the earth. It cannot but be admitted that such degrading notions exist among mankind, but what is the cause? The intuition about God

is that there is a Perfect Mind on whom we entirely depend, but then different nations have got different ideas of perfection. Rude nations believe true greatness to consist in power only. As they are more struck by the sight of evil than that of good, they consider it a greater manifestation of power to do evil than good. Hence some nations believe the Deity to be of an evil nature, as did the ancient Jews, who thought God to be a jealous and revengeful god. Rude nations consider such rulers as are stern, nay cruel, as greater than those who are not so; but as their ideas of perfection improve with their judgment, they believe true greatness to lie in power regulated by justice and mercy.

The law of progress applies to religion as to other things. Is not progress to be perceived in the sacred writings of the Christians also? Was it not a great transition from the Elohim of Moses to the God of the New Testament? "A change passes over the Jewish religion from fear to love, from power to wisdom, from the justice of God to the mercy of God, from the nation to the individual, from this world to another, from the visitation of the sins of the father upon the children, to 'every soul shall bear its own iniquity'; from the fire, the earthquake, and the storm, to the 'still small voice'."

Our reverend friends maintain that it was Christ who first revealed correct notions of religion to mankind, and that they did not possess them before his appearance. Now this

is a statement contradicted by all history.

I would recommend, Gentlemen, to your attentive perusal the "Intellectual System of the Universe" by old Dr. Cudworth, whose liberal Christianity the reverend gentlemen in question would do well to imitate. This book contains innumerable proofs of the existence of correct notions of the godhead prevailing among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

The Apostles and the Fathers of the early christian church were more liberal in their acknowledgments of the merits of the so-called heathens in this respect than our present Christians. Every one who has read the New Testament must recollect the oft-quoted celebrated saying of St. Paul: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifested in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse; because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened."

Now from the expressions "God hath showed it unto them", "clearly seen", and especially "they are without excuse", it is plain that the apostle believed that the light of nature was

quite sufficient to give man a correct knowledge of God Instead of thinking with our modern Christians that the heathens did not possess correct knowledge of God, the said apostle did not think it beneath him to borrow a line from the Greek poet Aratus: "in him we live and move and have our being"; and another from the Dramatist Menander, "evil communications corrupt good manners". One of the Fathers of the early church called Socrates St. Socrates on account of his noble life and still nobler death. Another was so struck with the beautiful religious and moral sayings found in Greek authors that he said that a man might judge either the present Christians are philosophers or the old philosophers were Christians.

Turning from the one branch of the Aryan manifestation of the religious sentiment ~~that is~~ the Hellenic to the Indian, (there have been but two great manifestations of the religious sentiment in the world, that is the Aryan and the Shemetic,) I would recommend to the religious inquirer the perusal of the compilation named Brahmo Dharma published by the Calcutta Samaj many years ago. It contains religious sayings selected from the Shasters, so austerely simple yet so replete with sublimity and beauty as to justify the assertion of Frederic Schlegel: "It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed knowledge of the true God. All their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions noble, clear, severely grand, as deeply conceived and reverentially

expressed as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God." The Brahmo Dharma also contains beautiful moral precepts rivalling in excellence any found in the Scriptures of other nations.

Our reverend friends lay great stress on the point that it was the Bible that brought life and immortality to light. If that be the case, why is the belief in a future existence and the distribution of future rewards and punishments so prevalent among almost all non-Christian nations? Why are there such beautiful descriptions of the destination of the human soul found in their religious Scriptures? This leads us to believe that the immortality of the human soul is as much an intuitive belief as our convictions of the distinctness of the principle within us which we call "I", from the body and of its immeasurable superiority to the latter. This belief in future existence afterwards gains ample coroboration from the moral attributes of God which require a just distribution of rewards and punishments not witnessed in this life. Now believing in an intuitive truth is one thing, and giving a demonstration of it to others, another. People may often fail in the latter, tho' they cannot ignore the belief, as was the case with the Grecian philosopher Plato.

Logical demonstrations of the immortality of the soul given in modern times are more satisfactory than those given in ancient times because the *Science* of theology improves

with time just as other sciences, while the primary intuitions upon which the science of theology is based are the same in all ages and countries.

Some of our reverend friends account for the noble and beautiful sentiments met with in the so-called heathen writers about God, immortality of the soul and the moral duties of man by the theory that they are derived from a primeval revelation. Now this theory rests only on the authority of the Bible. As the Lectures of our reverend friends against Brahmoism are intended to edify the educated natives, most of whom do not believe in any revelation at all, to hazard an assertion on the authority of the Bible is as absurd as for an orthodox Hindoo to attempt to convince a Christian of the correctness of his opinions by citing in corroboration of them the authority of the Bhagavat Poorana, or Choitanya Choritamrita.

Our Christian friends maintain that the Gospel has revealed the true plan of redemption for our sins. It will be going beyond my limits if I discuss the question how far the opinions entertained by modern Christians on the subject agree with the Christianity of Christ or even apostolical Christianity, but suffice it to say that those entertained on it by those whom our christian friends call heathens, (I beg to be pardoned by them for stating the simple truth,) are superior to their own. The idea entertained of God by our

Christian friends is that of an oriental despot who, while punishing a criminal, looks more to his outraged honor than to the good of the state or the amendment of that criminal. The opinion that God punishes exactly in the same way as a human governor does who is not satisfied with only the repentance of a criminal or that punishment *in the sense in which it is taken by men* is as much necessary in the divine scheme of government as in the human is anthropomorphitic. Are not the pangs of remorse sufficient punishment for our sins? If remorse do not take place in the heart of a hardened sinner in this world, is it improbable that it may be awakened in his mind in a future state when his religious and moral susceptibilities along with his other faculties would be more improved than now? Will not then his own heart be a hell to him realizing the following description of Satan by the great author of Paradise Lost:

"For within him hell
He brings and round about him, nor from hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place."

Our reverend friends if they impartially consider the subject will find it more consonant to the infinite goodness of God to believe that he punishes the sinner as a father does his child in order to amend his conduct and not as a jealous revengeful eastern tyrant to vindicate his own outraged honor. Our reverend friends maintain that not a single religious or

moral truth has been discovered since the time of Christ. Why since the time of Christ? We may say since the creation of man, for religious and moral truths are as old as the human race, although their purification, which may be compared to that of a valuable metal from its state of rude ore and the discovery of the several modes of demonstrating them are more recent as they are the work of time. If no new religious or moral truth has been discovered since the time of Christ, another sort of discovery has been made that is the erroneousness of some of the beliefs of Christ, such as those in the propriety of asceticism, in the existence of devils, and the efficacy of exorcism and in the occurrence of the universal dissolution in his own generation.

Among these beliefs, I desire to dwell a little on the first of them, that is his belief in the propriety of leading an ascetical mode of life. Christ, though perhaps the greatest religious genius the world has ever seen, was still an ascetic, like those commonly met with in Asiatic countries. His not recognizing his mother when others pointed her out to him and his enjoining his diiciples not to care for tomorrow's food or raiment; in short the general mode of life which he led, followed afterwards by his disciples proves that he was an ascetic. Now this asceticism has been relaxed in Protestant countries although it exists in its integrity in Roman Catholic countries which are in this respect more christian than the former.

Christian missionaries remark the diversity of opinions prevailing among the Brahmos. The same might be remarked of Christians by Brahmos. The Brahmos, however have this superiority over the followers of exclusive religions that although an individual may have difference of opinion with the Samaj on minor points, he is reckoned a Brahmo if he agree in essentials. "Unity in essentials, variety in non essentials and toleration in all" might be predicated with greater correctness of the Brahmos than of Christians.

After attempting to refute the arguments generally advanced by Christian missionaries against Brahmoism, I now proceed to vindicate the Samaj from the charge of vacillation which our reverend friends have brought against it. They say that the Samaj has passed through three different stages of religious opinion, namely those of Vedantism, Rationalism, and Intuitionalism. This statement is not correct.

It must be frankly admitted that minor changes have taken place in the religious opinions of the Samaj but not in essentials. A belief independently of an external revelation in the One True God, "One only without a Second" the creator and the preserver of all, in the immortality of the soul and the existence of the moral law, in the distribution of future rewards and punishments and in the paramount necessity of worshipping God with love and leading a pure and blameless life has been the distinguishing characteristic of the Samaj from the time of Ram Mohan Roy to the present. It has never

believed in a written revelation except so far as it is consonant to reason.

Ram mohan Roy cited the authority of the Vedas while writing against popular Hinduism, that of the Bible while disproving the doctrine of the Trinity and that of the Koran while attacking the absurdities of Mahommedanism as in the Persian work "Towfatal Mohaedin" but he was neither a Hindu nor a Mahommedan nor a Christian in his religious opinions. His biographer in the "Calcutta Review" says on the authority of his immediate disciples that before he departed to Europe he told them that after his death the Hindoos will contend that he was a Vedantist, the Christians that he was a Unitarian Christian and the Mahommedans that he was a Mahommedan but he really belonged to no existing religious denomination in the world. The Catholicity of Ram Mohan Roy wore a triple aspect; that of Vedantism towards the Hindoos, that of Unitarianism towards Trinitarian Christians and a still purer form towards the Mahommedans in whose case he had not to contest with the doctrines of Multiplicity or Trinity. In the case of the Hindoos and Trinitarian Christians he thought it more proper to attempt to remove first from their minds the belief in many gods or three gods by attacking it with their own weapons than to preach pure theism to them.

The essential catholicity of the religious opinions of Ram mohan Roy plainly manifested itself in a theoretical form in the "Towfatal

Mohaedin" which by-the-bye was his earliest work and a very small pamphlet published by him in English, bearing the remarkable title of "Universal Religion" and in a practical form in the primitive consitution of the Calcutta Samaj. In the Trust Deed of the Samaj building, it is stated that it is to be used as a place of public meeting of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction for the worship of the Author of the Universe but not "under or by any other name peculiarly applied to any particular being or beings by any men or set of men whatever". The sermons to be preached and the hymns to be sung therein "should have a tendency to the strengthening the bond of union between men of all religious persuasions or creeds". It is said that, in accordance to this principle, in the very infancy of the Samaj, Eurasian boys used to sing the Psalms of David in English and Hindu musicians religious songs composed by Ram Mohan Roy and his friends in Bengali.

But Ram Mohan Roy was soon after obliged to give a more Hindu aspect to the Samaj for the propagation of the doctrine of the unity of God among his countrymen and that to such a degree that the Vedas which were now pronounced by him to be the chief guide of his followers in matters of religion were read in an adjoining room accessible only to Brahmins before public worship was held in the Samaj Hall and gifts were distributed to them on two or three successive Samaj anniversaries.

It is however plain that Ram Mohan Roy did not consider the Vedas to be inspired compositions because while he acknowledged the Vedas to be inspired he in the same breath admitted the Chrstian Scriptures also to be inspired. His idea of inspiration was not that of a miraculous process confined to any single age or nation but a gift coextensive with the human race. In the sense in which he acknowleged the Vedas and the Christian Scriptures to be inspired, he admitted even certain portions of the Poorans and the Tantras to be inspired. In his preface to his Bengali translation of the Ishopanishad, he says "Are not the Poorans and the Tantras Shastras? They *are* Shastras because *they* also proclaim the unity of God". In his opinion then, those portions only of the Poorans and the Tantras possessed Shastric authority which proclaimed the unity of God. It is still more curious to relate that he held the works of the celebrated Persian poet Jelalooddeen Roomee, called by way of eminence the Moulana, to be inspired in the same sense as the Vedanta. His biographer in the Calcutta Review says that he once expressed his intention to retire in his old age from worldly life and devote himself to the study of the Vedanta and the Mesnavi, the great work of the said Moulana. It is evident therefore that Ram Mohan Roy's idea of inspiration was that of a process of spiritual illumination and ecstasy shared by all the members of the human race in more or less degree.

The intelligent portion of the immediate disciples of Ram Mohan Roy did not mistake the sense in which he called the Vedas a revelation. They partook of his eclectic spirit, quoted with almost as much enthusiasm a precept from the Tantras as one from the Vedas—a *robaee* from a Soofee poet on the agreement between all religions as a *sloka* from the Bhagavat Geeta, and spoke with rapture (I state from personal observation) of the religion of themselves and their great teacher as being that of the wise of all ages and countries, as being in fact the universal religion.

After the death of Ram Mohan Roy, the catholic character of the Samaj was not destroyed. Even while its leaders admitted the Vedas to be a revelation, they did so solely on account of the "reasonableness and cogency of their doctrines" as compared with the other Shasters of the Hindus and the religious Scriptures of other nations. They rejected the idea of a revelation supported by external evidence. "The only ground" they said "on which the truth of any system of belief can be maintained is that founded on the nature of the doctrines inculcated by it". "If the doctrines of theology and the principles of morality taught in the sacred volumes referred to appear to be consonant to the dictates of sound reason and wisdom—if these tenets and precepts carry the unimpeachable character of truth in them—the man who has received them and continues to place his trust in them will have

no reason to fear the vituperative surmises of ungodliness in respect to his religion". (Vide Vedantic Doctrines Vindicated). The letter of Babu Debendro Nath Tagore published in the Englishman in October 1846 speaks of his religion as one "whose principles are echoed to by the dictates of that of nature and of human reason and human heart and *by the sense of the wisest of all ages and countries*". The Reverend Mr. Mullens, in his Essay on Vedantism, Brahmism and Christianity says: "Though the Brahmos claim the Vedas as a revelation of divine truth, they look primarily upon the works of *Nature* as their religious teacher. From nature they learned first, and because the Vedas (as they assert) agree with nature therefore they regard them as inspired". He quotes in support of the above assertion the following passage from the "Vedantic Doctrines Vindicated". "The knowledge derived from the sources of inspiration deals with eternal truths which require no other proof than what the whole creation and the mind of man unperverted by fallacious reasonings afford in abundance". It is therefore evident that the leaders of the Samaj at this time considered the Vedas to be revealed solely on account of the reasonableness and cogency of their doctrines. Their error lay in believing that whatever they contained was reasonable and cogent. As soon as they perceived their mistake after a wider study of the Vedas, they shook it off at once. Now why did they do so so easily? The reason is that a

higher standard of belief had always predominated in their minds as shown by the above extracts from their publications over that of written revelation, that is the standard of reason and as conscientious men they could not continue professing that to be a revelation which was found to contain errors.

The Samaj still holds that only those doctrines and precepts of a religious book that are reasonable and true are worthy of its belief as revealed by God who is the fountain of all truth. The present members of the Samaj maintain that the conformity of a doctrine to the dictates of reason in its intuitive and discursive forms constitutes its sole claim to our belief—that intuition lays the groundwork, and reasoning raises the superstructure of religion. As all reasoning is based on intuitive belief and as the Samaj has never denied the importance of reasoning in the determination of religious truth, its recognition of intuition cannot be reckoned as an organic change of principle but as rather a development of one previously entertained.

You see then, Gentlemen, that a belief in the great truths of religion independently of an external revelation and on the principle that the reasonableness of a doctrine is the only test of its truth has been the chief characteristic of the religious opinions of the Samaj from the time of Ram Mohan Roy to the present. There is also another feature of the Samaj which it has not lost from its first establishment to the present time. I mean its Hindu aspect as far as such aspect can be maintained

in conformity with the principles of true religion. The service of the Samaj contains extracts from the Shastras, books held in veneration by the people of India from ancient times. In discussion with orthodox Hindoos, *Slokas* are cited from them by the Brahmos in corroboration of their opinions. This practice has been adopted by some Christian missionaries also, giving a greater right to the Brahmos to its observance. The Brahmo Dharma Grantha or the manual of Brahmic faith consists of selections from the Shastras. The same process of selection and reformation but not of extirpation is now-a-days being also applied by the Brahmos to the ritual and customs of Bengal. Whatever in them is not opposed to the true religion and to right reason is being kept and whatever is so is being rejected. The Brahmos connot be blamed for displaying a certain degree of conservatism in the work of reformation. For instance what would an English Theist have done in a similar case? Would he have at once rejected the whole Bible and the whole of the old ceremonial and customs? Certainly not. "The natural result of the right of private judgment is to turn systematic Christianity into philosophy—a principle of ~~religion~~ reform applicable to all religions, to purify and to spiritualize; by which the Jew applying it to his Bible, the Hindoo to his Shastra, the Greek to his Plato, the modern European to the New Testament, the Mahommedan to the Koran and so forth, mankind might gradually become more united

in a brotherly eclectic feeling of piety and reverence, mutually allowing variety of customs, and consenting out of former creeds to 'reject the weeds and keep the flowers'." Although Brahmoism is the purest form of Hinduism and altho' the Samaj has a Hindu aspect which it would be a suicidal step to destroy, its members, as becomes the followers of universal religion, are not backward to acknowledge their obligations to other religions than Hinduism, especially Christianity to which they are more indebted than to any other of those religions.

The essential features of the Samaj have remained unaltered from the time of Ram Mohan Roy to the present but it has not however remained still since his death without making progress. The catholic religion is essentially of an expansive character. One of its leading doctrines is that religion like other things is subject to the law of progress and that the religious ideas of man develop, expand and purify themselves with time. The Samaj therefore professing as it does the catholic religion would have belied its character had it remained stereotyped on the Vedantic plate of Ram Mohan Roy and not made any progress since his time when its religious opinions admitted of progress. The progress which the Samaj has made since the time of that reformer has been both of a negative and a positive character. The negative progress lies in its abandoning its belief that whatever is contained in the Vedas is reasonable. The positive progress consists in the clear-

er and fuller recognition than before of intuition as the foundation of natural religion. I use the expression "clearer and fuller recognition than before" because such recognition is not of a very recent date as has been asserted to be. The Brahmo Dharma published about fourteen years ago has the expression একাত্ম প্রত্যয় সারং taken from the Mandookya Oopanishad of the Atharva Veda, meaning that the proof of the existence of God is intuition only. If any one turn over the file of the Tattwabodhinee Patrika for Sakabda 1776, he will find an article headed the ধর্ম্ম তত্ত্ব বিবেক in which it is distinctly stated that our belief in the fundamental truths of religion is of an intuitive character. In some other articles published about that period, intuition was stated to be the primary basis of religion.

The progress of Brahmoism will ever keep pace with the age. The latter can never outgrow our religion. When a new science springs up, the members of the Samaj do not require to take the infinite pains which the followers of other religions take to reconcile that science with the creed they profess. They hold that, instead of there being a natural antagonism between religion on the one hand and philosophy and science on the other, the latter exercise a friendly influence upon the former in refining and exalting it. With regard to the relation between science and religion, the Samaj echoes the following sentiments of an English writer: "True science and true religion are twin-

sisters and the separation of either from the other is sure to prove the death of both. Science prospers exactly in proportion as it is religious and religion flourishes in exact proportion to the scientific depth and firmness of its basis". Wih regard to the relation between philosophy and religion, the members of the Samaj say: "The inauguration of eclectic philsophy is already a fact in the philosophical world and serves to inspire us with the hope that side by side with catholic philosophy will reign catholic religion, that natural religion and natural psychology will triumphantly rise in harmony from the conflicts of contending sects". In conformity with such views, the Samaj has always gladly admitted scientific and philosophical articles into the coloumns of the Tattwabodhinee Pattrika. In short the opinions of the Samaj on this point can be thus summed up that there is no disagreement between Common Sense and Philosophy, between Reason and Revelation, between Theology and Science but that each has its own prescribed functions which must be perfected by those of the other in the building up of the grand edifice of Theism.

Brahmo brethren who are present in this Hall, I have a word to tell you before I conclude. Controversy with the followers of other religions we cannot avoid both for purposes of self vindication as well as of conversion but let us set an example to them in what spirit religious controversy is to be conducted. Appealing to those sentiments which every religion

has in common with Brahmoism for Brahmoism is *the* universal religion, we should try to wean the followers of other religions from their errors and prejudices in the spirit of charity and love, for we are children of the one common father. Let us recollect the remarkable words of the great founder of our religion "strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds." Let us not lose our temper at the time of discussion. Let us not indulge in sarcasm instead of fair argumentation for sarcasm but ill befits the most momentous of all subjects, religion. Let us not sacrifice candor at the altar of liveliness. Let us not for the sake of appearing smart lose sight of the duty of behaving fairly towards the followers of other religions for they are men and as men they are our brethren.

I see some of us are very fond of religious controversy but let us not give way to an over-fondness for it, forgetting the primary duties of man as a religious being. Let us pay more attention to our own religious and moral improvement and that of our country than to how we will best acquit ourselves in religious controversy. Let us always cherish in our minds a lively consciousness of the Divine presence. Let us in all our actions keep Him before our minds' eye as "an abiding presence not to be put by". While we are engaged in the duties of worldly life, let us remember we are in the presence of a Task-master whom we cannot deceive though we can deceive our earthly task-master. When we indulge in harmless pleasures and amusements, let us think of Him as a father who is ob-

serving the mirth of his children. When we are holding a great religious festival, let us consider Him as at once its spectator and object. When we hold a meeting for any other purpose connected with religion than worship, let us consider Him as its great president. When we worship Him in the Samaj Hall, let us adore Him as the living deity of the temple. Let us in all our thoughts words and deeds keep Him before us.

Let us be pure and holy in our lives. Let us show to the idolater that our religion is not a dead religion, a religion only to be talked of and not acted up to. Let us make sacrifices for our religion and thereby show our countrymen that we love it with all our minds, all our hearts and all our strength, then will they think that Brahmoism is something and that it is not to be made light of. Let us think more of our country's than of our own interests. Let us direct our chief attention to the education and social improvement of our women for if one half of our population be in darkness how can the other half prosper? Let us be always up and doing for our country is in a state of transition and the duties of those who live at such a period are not light.

Lord God! our Father! our Savior! our Redeemer! give us strength to bear the trials of this awfully critical time. To Thee we look up for succour for we are weak. Always grant the light of thy countenance for that light alone is our only consolation amid the darkness and dangers of our situation. From Thee alone come strength, comfort, and bliss. Forsake us not but infuse patience, firmness and fortitude into our souls so that we may stand as witnesses of Thy glory to generations to come.